EXHIBIT 3

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY, PENNSYLVANIA CIVIL TRIAL DIVISION

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DONALD J. TRUMP FOR PRESIDENT, INC., : NO. 2020-18680 GARRITY FOR PA, HEIDELBAUGH FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL, INC.,: REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE, DANIEL J. WISSERT, Plaintiffs, VS. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS, : Defendant, and DEMOCRATIC SERVICES CORPORATION/ DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE, Intervenor, and DEMOCRATIC SERVICES CORPORATION/ DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE, Pro Hac Vice Attorney, : and UZOMAN N. NKWONTA, Pro Hac Vice Attorney. :

Petition for Review of Decision by Montgomery County Board of Elections

Tuesday, November 10, 2020 Commencing at 9:00 a.m.

Bernadette Black Berardinelli, RDR, CRR, CRC
Official Court Reporter
Taken Remotely Via Videoconference
Montgomery County Courthouse
Norristown, Pennsylvania

BEFORE: THE HONORABLE RICHARD P. HAAZ, JUDGE

COUNSEL APPEARED AS FOLLOWS:

JONATHAN S. GOLDSTEIN, ESQUIRE for the Plaintiffs

RAYMOND McGARRY, ESQUIRE

JOSHUA M. STEIN, ESQUIRE

MARY KAY BROWN, ESQUIRE

for Defendant Montgomery County

Board of Elections

TIMOTHY FORD, ESQUIRE

For Montgomery County Democratic

Committee

UZOMA NKWONTA, ESQUIRE, PRO HOC VICE INTERVENOR
MICHAEL R. McDONALD, ESQUIRE
KAHLIL C. WILLIAMS, ESQUIRE
COURTNEY ELGERT, ESQUIRE
JOHN GEISE, ESQUIRE
STEPHANIE COMMAND, ESQUIRE
for the Intervenors
Democratic National Committee

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1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 2 PROCEEDINGS 3 (Proceedings were commenced with the 4 Court and Counsel being present.) 5 6 (Discussion held off the record.) 7 8 THE COURT: Let's begin. Let's go on 9 the record. 10 Good morning, everybody. We are here 11 today for oral argument on the Petition for Review of 12 Decision by Montgomery County Board of Elections, filed 13 by Petitioner Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. And 14 the author of the petition and present to argue today 15 will be Jonathan Goldstein. My understanding is that 16 the relief which is being sought by the petitioner is 17 being imposed by the Montgomery County Board of 18 Elections and also by the Intervenor, Democratic 19 National Committee. 20 Before we begin the arguments, would 21 everyone please identify themselves for the record? 22 Why don't we start with Mr. Goldstein, since you are 23 the petitioner? 24 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Good morning, Your 25 Honor, Jonathan Goldstein on behalf of Donald J. Trump

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- 2 and related parties.
- THE COURT: Good morning to you.
- 4 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Good morning, Your
- 5 Honor.
- 6 THE COURT: Next is the Board and the
- 7 County representatives.
- 8 MR. McGARRY: Yes, Your Honor. Raymond
- 9 McGarry, on behalf of the Board of Elections. And with
- 10 me, Your Honor, is Mary Kay Brown and Joshua Stein.
- 11 THE COURT: Good morning to all of you.
- 12 And, Mr. McGarry, you will be arguing
- solely on behalf of the Board and the County?
- 14 MR. McGARRY: That is correct, Your
- 15 Honor.
- 16 THE COURT: All right. On behalf of the
- 17 DNC.
- MR. NKWONTA: Good morning, Your Honor.
- 19 Uzoma Nkwonta, on behalf of Intervenor DNC. With me is
- 20 Mr. Kahlil Williams, Mr. Michael McDonald, Mr. John
- 21 Geise, Ms. Courtney Elgert, and Ms. Stephanie Command.
- THE COURT: Good morning to all of you
- 23 collectively.
- And my understanding is Mr. Geise is
- 25 participating by phone only; there is not a visual

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- 2 aspect to his participation.
- And you will be arguing on behalf of the
- 4 DNC, you, yourself?
- 5 MR. NKWONTA: Yes, Your Honor.
- 6 THE COURT: Well, Mr. Goldstein, are you
- 7 prepared to begin your argument?
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: I am, Your Honor.
- 9 THE COURT: Please, proceed.
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Your Honor.
- 11 We're so grateful for the opportunity to be here today
- 12 with the Court and everybody else. Before I begin my
- 13 substantive argument, I should say Mr. McGarry, and
- 14 Mr. Stein in particular, have been very easy to work
- with. We've just been so grateful for the way they've
- been open with us and enabled this to proceed very
- smoothly. I haven't had the opportunity to speak by
- 18 phone with any of the folks from the DNC, but I trust
- 19 they will proceed in much the same manner.
- 20 You know, in terms of the substantive
- 21 argument, the mail-in balloting, the ballot counting
- 22 statute at 25 P.S. 3150.16(a) says in pertinent part:
- 23 The elector shall then fill out, date, and sign the
- 24 declaration.
- 25 The Court has before it a narrow

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- 2 question: Does "fill out" mean anything other than
- 3 what its plain language calls for, and do we need to
- 4 look anywhere else to understand what "fill out" means?
- 5 I submit we do not need to look elsewhere. The meaning
- 6 of the language is self evident.
- 7 If a doctor's office hands you a form
- 8 and tells you to fill it out, and you hand it back with
- 9 blanks, they will tell you, "You didn't fill it out.
- 10 Go finish it." Fill it out means just that.
- 11 Why did the General Assembly want the
- 12 elector to fill out his address in his own hand? I
- 13 contend that the General Assembly believes that seeing
- 14 the elector write his address in his own hand serves
- 15 perhaps as a vital anti-fraud function as a part of the
- 16 declaration. This contention is as viable a claim as
- 17 those of the Board and the DNC. But the real truth is
- 18 it is speculation on everyone's part, what the General
- 19 Assembly intended.
- 20 What is not speculations is that it is
- 21 axiomatic that the General Assembly never uses an
- 22 extraneous word. That is a maxim under Pennsylvania
- 23 law: Shall. Fill out. Date and sign.
- 24 Filling out is as much a part as signing
- 25 or dating. It was in the view of the General Assembly,

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- 2 and it is their view that prevails here. It was as
- 3 much a vital part as either the signing or the dating.
- 4 We can't just substitute our judgment for that of the
- 5 General Assembly's incredibly clear language. "Fill
- 6 out" means fill out completely.
- 7 As for the argument that these ballots
- 8 were to be counted and are unchallengeable as cast,
- 9 this argument fails on its face. The DNC admits as
- 10 much by noting that the Secretary of State gave
- 11 guidance on how to handle challenges to the County's
- 12 ballot. The Secretary is not going to give guidance on
- 13 a procedure that is illegal. And the DNC knows this,
- 14 and the Secretary knows this, and everyone knows this.
- These ballots can be challenged; otherwise, you can end
- 16 up with an absurd circumstance.
- 17 For example, imagine the Board
- 18 erroneously allowed a dead, non-citizen, convicted
- 19 felon to cast a ballot. Would we all sit here
- 20 powerless to do nothing about it? "Sorry, no
- 21 challenges"? Of course not. It is misread of the
- 22 election code to say challenges had to be made to
- 23 mail-in ballots by the Friday before the election.
- 24 That's why election is as the DNC contented [sic].
- 25 That won't work. Ballots cast in that way, by mail-in

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- or absentee, or embargoed under 25 P.S. 3146.8(a),
- 3 which says in pertinent part, The County Boards of
- 4 Election, upon receipt of an official absentee ballot
- 5 in such envelopes, shall safely keep the same in sealed
- or locked containers, until they distribute the same to
- 7 the appropriate local election districts in a manner
- 8 prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth.
- 9 So to contend that we could have
- 10 challenged them back last Friday is false. They can't
- 11 be examined or challenged because they're held, sealed,
- 12 and locked in containers, by the County Board.
- 13 Finally, as for Secretary's guidance on
- 14 what constitutes a sufficiently filled-out declaration,
- 15 Secretary Boockvar can't issue guidance that changes
- 16 the statute. Again, 25 P.S. 3150.16(a) says in
- 17 pertinent part, The elector shall then fill out, date,
- 18 and sign the declaration. It's three independent acts
- 19 that are required.
- "Fill out" means fill out. It has
- 21 independent meaning from "sign" and from "date." It is
- 22 mandatory because the word "shall" is joined in the
- 23 same sentence with all three required acts.
- 24 Accordingly, the Board erred, and the ballots go to the
- 25 subject of this appeal should not be counted.

- TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 1 Thank you, Your Honor. 2 3 THE COURT: Suppose -- so I am looking 4 at the instructions. And in one of the instructions --5 and I will ask this of the County, as to whether these 6 are from the Secretary or they are done locally. But 7 it says, sign and date the return envelope for the 8 absentee ballots. It doesn't talk about putting your 9 address on. 10 But suppose this and other instructions 11 are either ambiguous or faulty. Is the remedy to 12 invalidate that vote if the Secretary or the local 13 board has given faulty or ambiguous instructions --14 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes. 15 THE COURT: -- that is relied upon? 16 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yes, that is the remedy. The fact that the County Board committed an error -- it 17 18 would be like the County Board misstating a deadline 19 that's laid out in statute. It is a tragedy perhaps. 20 It is an error perhaps, but you can't rewrite a statute 21 with a set of instructions or with guidance from the 22 Government official. 23 THE COURT: Both the DNC and the
- County -- the DNC spent more time in their brief on it than the County did. But they have suggested and

TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 1 2 argued that the new election code has eliminated, either restricted and/or eliminated, the right of third 3 parties to challenge any deficiencies such as you're 4 5 doing right now. You didn't file a reply brief. They 6 only filed their materials yesterday. What is your 7 reply to that? You touched upon it. 8 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Yeah. So our reply is 9 that they misperceived what is going on. 10 challenge procedures are still in the statute. They're still viable and vital. And the place where they say a 11 12 challenge could be made is a place where a challenge 13 cannot be made. The Friday before the election, those 14 ballots are still locked in a sealed container, so I 15 can't examine them. I can't challenge them. And what 16 they propose as a scheme for challenging defies the plain language of the statute, defies the procedures 17 18 that are in use everywhere in the state. We have to be 19 able to challenge them in this way or it yields the 20 certain results I've indicated. 21 If the Board had allowed somebody to 22 vote and they couldn't vote and we all knew it, under 23 their scheme, we would just have to allow it because 24 this person applied for something some manner of weeks

25

ago.

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- THE COURT: In your petition, which is
- 3 right before me -- and I read it several times -- you
- 4 don't claim that any electors or the Board of the
- 5 County were guilty of fraud, correct? That's correct?
- 6 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Your Honor, accusing
- 7 people of fraud is a pretty big step. And it is rare
- 8 that I call somebody a liar, and I am not calling the
- 9 Board of the DNC or anybody else involved in this a
- 10 liar. Everybody is coming to this with good faith.
- 11 The DNC is coming with good faith. We're all just
- 12 trying to get an election done. We think these were a
- 13 mistake, but we think they are a fatal mistake, and
- 14 these ballots ought not be counted.
- 15 THE COURT: I understand. I am asking
- 16 you a specific question, and I am looking for a
- 17 specific answer. Are you claiming that there is any
- fraud in connection with these 592 disputed ballots?
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: To my knowledge at
- 20 present, no.
- 21 THE COURT: Are you claiming that there
- is any undue or improper influence upon the elector
- with respect to these 592 ballots?
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: To my knowledge at
- 25 present, no.

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- THE COURT: Does it make a difference
- 3 whether a claim of irregularity or technical
- 4 noncompliance with the election code is made with or
- 5 without an accompanying claim of fraud or improper
- 6 influence?
- 7 MR. GOLDSTEIN: It does not. I mean, to
- 8 claim the technical defects are immaterial, which is in
- 9 some sense some of the thrust of what the DNC argued,
- 10 is really to misperceive what is going on in the
- 11 election code. The election code is technical.
- These requirements are all technical.
- 13 And some of them sit in that code for reasons that are
- 14 a mystery for all of us. I mean, I sort of recounted
- 15 for you my view of why the elector signing in his own
- 16 hand is material. The DNC have their reasons for why
- 17 they think it is material or immaterial. The fact of
- 18 the matter is, it is in the code. The code is itself
- 19 technical. Those technicalities are part and parcel of
- 20 the law and a violation of the results in a ballot that
- 21 can't be counted.
- THE COURT: All right. I don't have any
- 23 questions for you.
- I have a question for generally whoever
- 25 prepared the stipulation. So I will ask it of you and

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- 2 then we will go to Mr. McGarry.
- 3 So we're looking at the 592 ballots.
- 4 First of all, do you believe they all should be treated
- 5 the same?
- 6 MR. GOLDSTEIN: So one of the things
- 7 that happened as we negotiated the stipulation is, you
- 8 know, I pointed the DNC and the County to our paper
- 9 petition, right, where we said that there were defects,
- 10 facial defects. And I thought the objections I could
- 11 make would range from absence of a signature, a date
- that was wrong, or a missing address. The other
- 13 parties to the stipulation thought that I had somehow,
- 14 in our initial phone call with the Court, limited
- 15 myself only to addresses.
- I don't believe I so limited myself. I
- 17 think I am limited by the corners of my petition, and
- that any of these ballots that have a missing
- 19 signature, a date that is wrong, or an address that is
- 20 wrong, would fail on the basis of both the pleading I
- 21 made and the oral argument that I just made. They're
- 22 required to fill out, date, and sign. And any of those
- 23 things missing is fatal to that ballot.
- 24 THE COURT: So your answer is that all
- 25 592 ballots should be invalidated?

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- 2 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Correct. Yes, Your
- 3 Honor.
- 4 THE COURT: And there should not be a
- 5 separate analysis for the subsets of different types of
- 6 irregularities that may exist on some ballots?
- 7 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Certainly if the Court
- 8 is going to deny my motion in its entirety on that
- 9 basis, I would look for perhaps smaller subsets that
- 10 the Court might find appropriate to strike.
- If you were to say, for example, I am
- 12 not striking these on the basis that an address is
- missing, I would want the opportunity to strike the
- ones where the date is missing or wrong or somebody
- 15 wrote, for example, their birthdate or where the
- 16 signature is missing or, you know, illegible, things
- 17 like that.
- THE COURT: Okay. You're raising
- 19 irregularity with respect to date. I am looking at
- 20 your stipulation; specifically, Footnote 1. And I
- 21 thought the scope of irregularities was only the
- 22 address, partial address, placed -- go ahead.
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: I am sorry, Your Honor.
- 24 I didn't mean to talk over you.
- THE COURT: Go ahead.

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- 2 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Zoom is challenging.
- 3 So, you know, in the interest of getting
- 4 the stipulation done -- and we had some back and forth
- 5 e-mails about it -- I said, "Look, I will stipulate to
- 6 this," you know to what we stipulated to. But I did
- 7 reserve the right and I did, I think, in my pleading
- 8 preserve the ability to challenge, you know, beyond
- 9 just a missing address.
- 10 THE COURT: Okay. So I will ask -- I
- 11 will ask the County. They're the ones that actually
- 12 have the ballots in their possession. Okay. Is there
- anything more you wish to add?
- 14 MR. GOLDSTEIN: No, Your Honor. We're
- just so grateful for the opportunity to be here with
- 16 everyone today to discuss this important issue. Thank
- 17 you.
- THE COURT: Well, thanks so much.
- Mr. McGarry.
- MR. McGARRY: Thank you.
- THE COURT: Before you begin, let me
- 22 just start off with my questions. So there are
- 23 subsets. There are 592 ballots which have been
- 24 identified and segregated. You've identified, of that,
- 25 509 that have the voter's address preprinted on the

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- 2 outer envelope, to the right of the voter's
- 3 declaration. There is a subset: 266 of those people
- 4 put their addresses on the front of the envelope, not
- 5 on the back, where probably it was indicated.
- Does that mean that for the other 243 of
- 7 the 509 there's no written address by the elector,
- 8 there is just the printed address that the County put
- 9 on the envelope?
- MR. McGARRY: Your Honor, for that
- 11 number that you just said, the answer to your question
- 12 is that in addition to having the printed address,
- 13 there also is the bar code, Your Honor. And the bar
- 14 code scans to the SURE system with a specific
- identification of the voter involved, which would
- 16 include their address. But in terms of handwriting the
- 17 address on the outer envelope, you are correct.
- 18 THE COURT: Thank you. All right. Why
- don't you begin? I have several questions for you as
- 20 well. Why don't you begin with your argument?
- MR. McGARRY: Okay. Thank you, Your
- Honor.
- 23 First, as to the scope of the issue
- 24 before the Court. Your Honor, we believe that the only
- 25 issue involved in this appeal relates to the 592

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- 2 ballots for which electors did not print some or all of
- 3 the address information in the spaces provided below
- 4 the declaration. This lack of complete address
- 5 information from this group of ballots was identified
- 6 to the Montgomery County Republican Committee by Joshua
- 7 Stein. Upon presentation of that issue to
- 8 Mr. Goldstein, counsel for the Republican party raised
- 9 an objection as to that issue only, as to the address
- 10 issue only.
- 11 That objection was overruled. No
- 12 objection has ever been raised to the Board with regard
- 13 to the date or, rather, any other aspect of the
- 14 declaration; thus, this Court, we believe, lacks
- jurisdiction to hear any issue related to any other
- 16 aspect of the declaration other than the issue related
- 17 to the address.
- 18 THE COURT: May I ask you just a
- 19 question for a moment? All 592 bear the signatures of
- 20 the electors; is that correct?
- MR. McGARRY: That's my understanding,
- 22 Your Honor. Yes.
- THE COURT: Okay.
- MR. McGARRY: Now, we've just discussed
- 25 some of the facts. And, Your Honor, from our

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- 2 perspective, this is an issue of statutory
- 3 construction. We believe that the statutory analysis
- 4 doesn't end with 3150.16. It starts there, but it
- 5 doesn't end there. And so we believe that you start
- 6 there. And we would agree that the language of the
- 7 statute says, "The elector shall then fill out, date,
- 8 and sign the declaration, print it on the outer
- 9 envelope." There is no statutory requirement in this
- 10 section for the filling out or the printing of the
- 11 address. It is just not there.
- 12 So then the question becomes -- by the
- way, Your Honor, if the Legislature wanted to require
- 14 the address, they could have, as is present in that
- same very section, in Subsection (a)(1), where they do
- 16 require the printing of an address of a witness who is
- 17 signing for an elector who is unable to sign the
- 18 declaration. So we know the Legislature, if they
- 19 wanted to require the address, could have required the
- 20 address.
- THE COURT: How do you interpret the
- 22 language "fill in"?
- MR. McGARRY: So that language, Your
- 24 Honor -- at the time that was developed by the
- 25 Legislature, there had been no declaration prepared.

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- 2 They left to the Legislature -- I was just about to get
- 3 to that 3150.14(b). They left to the Secretary of the
- 4 Commonwealth the obligation and the right to create the
- 5 form of the declaration. And they only require two
- 6 things, Your Honor, in that form of declaration:
- 7 One, a statement of elector's
- 8 qualification;
- 9 Two, a statement the elector has not
- 10 already voted at the election.
- Those are the two mandatory requirements
- of the section of the statute as to what has to be in
- 13 this declaration. Both of those things are in the
- 14 declaration. And for every one of these 592 ballots,
- 15 the elector has signed the declaration and dated the
- 16 declaration.
- 17 THE COURT: May I just stop you for a
- 18 second? What is meant by the qualifications of the
- 19 elector?
- MR. McGARRY: Well, Your Honor, that
- 21 they are registered to vote. And as you can see, if
- 22 you want to take a look at -- we will look at Exhibit B
- 23 to the stipulation. There is a statement, an
- 24 independent statement in the declaration, the second
- 25 sentence, I believe, Your Honor, that starts, "I am

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- 2 qualified to vote the enclosed ballot." So there is an
- 3 independent statement in this declaration that the
- 4 elector is qualified to vote the enclosed ballot. So
- 5 that is in compliance with the statute, that there be a
- 6 statement of qualification of the voter.
- 7 THE COURT: What are those qualifications?
- MR. McGARRY: That they be registered to
- 9 vote.
- 10 THE COURT: Registered to vote at a
- 11 specific location?
- MR. McGARRY: Well, when you register to
- 13 vote, you do register at a specific location, but the
- 14 requirement under the act is that you be registered to
- 15 vote.
- THE COURT: Anywhere?
- 17 MR. McGARRY: That you be qualified as
- 18 registered to vote.
- 19 THE COURT: The question is whether the
- 20 address of the elector makes a difference and affects
- 21 their qualifications to vote. Does it mean qualified
- 22 to vote anywhere or qualified to vote in that
- 23 particular voting district or county?
- MR. McGARRY: Well, in this case, Your
- 25 Honor, the specific county and voting district of the

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- 2 elector is contained -- that information is contained
- 3 within the bar code. So if you will look at the bar
- 4 code, there is a number --
- 5 Look at this, the example we're looking
- 6 at for Christopher.
- 7 THE COURT: Which exhibit are you
- 8 referencing?
- 9 MR. McGARRY: This is Exhibit B to the
- 10 stipulation.
- 11 THE COURT: B.
- MR. McGARRY: B, as in boy.
- 13 THE COURT: Right. Okay. I am with
- 14 you.
- MR. McGARRY: So the first nine digits
- 16 that you see on this bar code correspond to a unique
- 17 number assigned to each elector. Next, there is a dash
- and then 46. 46 is the number specified for the
- 19 county, Montgomery County.
- The next digits that correspond on this
- 21 bar code correspond to the election precinct for that
- 22 voter. So all of that information is contained within
- 23 the outer envelope so that, from a fraud perspective --
- if we're worried about fraud, there is no possibility
- 25 of fraud because we have a verification of the voter,

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- 2 the precinct, and the name all on this ballot. And
- 3 when it's scanned into the system, all of that is
- 4 verified, and the voter's ballot is then crossed off as
- 5 being voted.
- There is no issue of fraud here, Your
- 7 Honor, and all of that information, including the
- 8 precinct, is included within the outer envelope. Okay?
- 9 THE COURT: So that is a safeguard so
- 10 the person has not voted twice.
- 11 MR. McGARRY: Has not voted twice,
- 12 exactly. That's exactly right, Your Honor.
- THE COURT: My only issue -- actually, I
- 14 think the best argument for Mr. Goldstein, which he did
- not make, was how do we know that person still resides
- in the County? If that person moved somewhere else,
- outside the county, outside the state, has comes back,
- 18 picked up the mail, saw and this, filled it in and sent
- 19 it back, would they still be a qualified voter in
- 20 Montgomery County under those circumstances where
- 21 they're not affixing their signature and/or consent or
- 22 affirmation that the information is correct at least as
- 23 to where they exist?
- In other words, in that set of
- 25 circumstance, they would not have voted twice, and they

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- 2 would not be an ineligible voter from your perspective,
- 3 but you wouldn't know where they currently live and, in
- 4 terms of their residential address, if they're a
- 5 qualified voter in Montgomery County.
- 6 MR. McGARRY: Well, Your Honor, the
- 7 prevention to that is these ballots were mailed to the
- 8 address.
- 9 THE COURT: Okay.
- MR. McGARRY: So once again, Your Honor,
- 11 as I was starting to talk about, in 3150.14(b), there
- 12 is no requirement that the declaration itself include a
- 13 statement of the address.
- 14 So then the question becomes what
- ballots may be counted? And under 25 P.S.
- 16 3146.8(g)(3), which governs the canvassing of both
- 17 absentee and mail-in ballots, the statute says that if
- 18 the County Board is satisfied that that the declaration
- 19 is sufficient, the votes should be counted. So it is
- 20 up to the Board to determine that they are satisfied
- 21 that the declaration is sufficient.
- 22 THE COURT: And what criteria does the
- 23 Board utilize to make that determination?
- MR. McGARRY: Your Honor, the criteria
- 25 is to look at the ballot. It is a criteria set forth

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- 2 in the statute, which is to look at the ballot, compare
- 3 the signature with the name that's in the roll of the
- 4 voters, and to use the scanning system to verify that
- 5 the vote is of that person and that, in fact, that vote
- 6 has been counted.
- 7 THE COURT: You know, I am just curious,
- 8 when a person goes and votes in person, as we all do,
- 9 you go to your local voting/polling station. And then
- 10 you identify yourself and you sign. And they have
- 11 already your signature on record. But I am trying to
- 12 think back to my own experience. Is it required that
- 13 the poll workers and/or the election judge locally say
- 14 to you, "Do you still reside at this address?"
- MR. McGARRY: No, Your Honor, there is
- 16 no such requirement. And as Your Honor is well aware,
- 17 there is no requirement that any ID be shown unless it
- is your first time voting at a particular polling
- 19 location.
- THE COURT: Okay.
- MR. McGARRY: So under this statute, the
- 22 Board has given the full discretion to decide if the
- 23 declaration is sufficient. And that's an interesting
- use of the word "sufficient," Your Honor.
- 25 Because "sufficient," if you look at the Cambridge

TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 1 English Dictionary, is defined as "enough for a 2 3 particular purpose." The Legislature used that word 4 specifically, sufficient. And I think that any 5 argument that something that not in the statute, such as an address, is mandatory simply goes against the 6 7 entire concept of the Board of Elections making a 8 determination that a declaration is sufficient. 9 Next, Your Honor, since the form of 10 declaration is that of the Secretary of State, we 11 believe that it is important to understand the guidance 12 from the Secretary of State in terms of whether ballots 13 should not be counted. And the September 11th, 2020, 14 quidance of the Secretary of State specifically states 15 that "Only where the declaration is blank," meaning no 16 signature, no date, nothing, "should that vote not be 17 counted." 18 Finally, as Your Honor pointed out to 19 Mr. Goldstein, the instructions, which are Exhibit A to 20 the stipulation, Your Honor, specifically tell the 21 elector that your ballot cannot be counted without a 22 signature on the return envelope. There is nothing on 23 there that tells the elector that if their address is 24 not filled out that their ballot cannot be counted. 25 And I would disagree with Mr. Goldstein

TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 1 2 about the significance of that. There is case law that 3 we cited, In Re.: Count of Ballots Cast in the General Election of November 6, 1973, in which the Supreme 4 5 Court states, "The innocent voter should not be punished by a nullification of her vote where her 6 7 reliance on instructions given by" the Board in that 8 case, "were entirely reasonable." We would say the instructions given here were entirely reasonable, 9 10 because they comport with the statute and they comport 11 with the quidance provided by the Secretary of State. So that's all I have on this issue, Your 12 13 Honor, unless you have any other questions. 14 THE COURT: I actually have a couple 15 questions about the instruction. What was the process 16 that led to the instructions of the outer envelope? Was that done locally, or in every county in 17 18 Pennsylvania, are those instructions the same? 19 MR. McGARRY: I don't know if they're 20 all the same. But I know that this form of instruction 21 was created locally by the Board of Elections. 22 THE COURT: And what role, if any, did 23 the local political parties have in preparing and reviewing that language used in the instructions? 24

MR. McGARRY: Your Honor, that I am not

25

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 sure of the answer to that question. Mr. Goldstein
- 3 might be better to answer that question.
- But I will say, Your Honor, that these
- 5 instructions have been out for months, and there have
- 6 been no objections to these instructions by any of the
- 7 parties.
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: I don't know that we
- 9 ever had substantial input into those instructions. I
- 10 think that was essentially an administerial task on the
- 11 part of the Board.
- 12 THE COURT: So I will ask you the same
- 13 question I asked him: Should all 592 ballots be
- 14 treated the same?
- MR. McGARRY: Your Honor, we believe
- 16 they all should be counted. The reason we included
- 17 some subcategories of information was to advise the
- 18 Court that not all the ballots were exactly the same;
- 19 that, in fact, some of them were partially filled out,
- 20 some not filled out at all. And we wanted to be
- 21 totally transparent with the Board about the state of
- these ballots. So we do believe they all should be
- 23 counted.
- However, if Your Honor was inclined to
- 25 strike any of them, the only ones we think there should

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 be even the thought -- and we don't think they should
- 3 be stricken at all -- is the 36 ballots where the
- 4 address is nowhere on the envelope.
- 5 THE COURT: Let's just talk about them
- for a second. So there's 36 ballots of 592 that don't
- 7 have any identifying information regarding the address
- 8 of the elector; is that correct?
- 9 MR. McGARRY: Well, they do have the bar
- 10 code, Your Honor.
- 11 THE COURT: They have the bar code,
- 12 correct.
- MR. McGARRY: The web scan does bring up
- 14 the address and the voter information of the individual
- 15 elector.
- THE COURT: And so your position would
- be that even if any elector, these 36 and even all 592,
- 18 had no information by the elector -- setting aside the
- 19 bar code, but by the elector -- with respect to the
- 20 address, they would still be valid?
- MR. McGARRY: Yes, Your Honor that's our
- 22 position.
- THE COURT: There is another subset in
- 24 which the addresses were blacked out or blanked out.
- 25 It had something to do with -- to help facilitate UPS

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 to deliver something? I am not sure, who blacked them
- 3 out or blanked them out or blacked them out? Was that
- 4 done by the County?
- 5 MR. McGARRY: My understanding of that
- 6 issue was that after a large number of ballots had
- 7 already been mailed out, the Postal Service was
- 8 complaining about the fact the address shown was
- 9 confusing to some of the mail carriers. So the County,
- 10 through the use of a printer, blacked out the address
- 11 at the request of the Postal Service.
- 12 THE COURT: All right. That's all I
- have for you then. Have you finished your argument?
- 14 MR. McGARRY: I have, Your Honor. Thank
- 15 you very much.
- 16 THE COURT: Okay. You are very welcome,
- 17 of course.
- For the DNC, Mr. Nkwonta, you're an
- 19 intervenor here. Would you like to offer your
- 20 thoughts?
- MR. NKWONTA: Yes, Your Honor. There's
- just a few things, and I will try not to overly
- 23 replicate what prior counsel have already discussed.
- I did want to talk about the procedural
- 25 posture at this proceeding. And I wanted to explain

- TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 1 2 why it is improper that Petitioners have filed this 3 appeal despite the fact that the Legislature expressly 4 removed the right to challenge a mail-in or absentee 5 ballot during a canvassing process. This expressed removal of the right to challenge, it is not an 6 7 emptiless reading of the statute. 8 Prior to March 2020, which is when the 9 Legislature passed Act 12 of 25 P.S. 3146.8(g)(2) to 10 (3), expressly provided for challenges or expressly 11 permitted challenges to any absentee elector or mail-in 12 elector in accordance with the provisions of that 13 statute [sic]. 14 In Act 12, the Legislature expressly 15 removed those provisions and removed those references 16 to challenges to mail-in and absentee ballots during 17 the canvassing process. And, instead, what that
- to challenges to mail-in and absentee ballots during
 the canvassing process. And, instead, what that
 provision now states is that ballots that are not
 challenged or applications that are not challenged by
 5:00 p.m., the Friday before an election, if there is
 no challenge to the application, then those ballots
 shall be counted and canvassed.
- 23 And the reason for that, Your Honor, is 24 clear: The Legislature was concerned about the delay 25 that could be caused by challenges to mail-in absentee

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- 2 ballots. And when you look at the procedure that
- 3 follows such challenges -- procedures that were avoided
- 4 here, which is related to the issues that we've had
- 5 with the stipulations. But when you look at the
- 6 procedures, you know, there must be a formal notice
- 7 provided to the voters and challengers, then there must
- 8 be a formal hearing. And then at the hearing, the
- 9 challengers or the voters may call witnesses, and the
- 10 Board must hear testimony. That is not what the
- 11 Legislature intended. That's not what the Legislature
- 12 contemplated, especially given the large number of mail
- 13 ballots that have been cast in this election, which was
- on the Legislature's mind.
- 15 So when you look at now 25 P.S. 3146.8,
- 16 it simply says that all mail ballot applications that
- 17 are not challenged -- applications that are not
- 18 challenged -- those ballots shall be counted and
- included with the returns of the applicable election
- 20 district. This appeal was an end-around from what the
- 21 Legislature expressly forbade for a good reason. And I
- think it is also notable that Mr. Goldstein, counsel
- for the petitioners, was not able to point to any
- 24 specific provision in the election code that permitted
- 25 or contemplated challenges to mail-in or absentee

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 ballots during the canvassing process.
- Now, there may be some references to
- 4 challenges of mail ballots and absentee ballots as
- 5 prior vestiges of the pre-existing scheme because not
- 6 every related provision was altered. But when you look
- 7 at the provisions that most directly confront the
- 8 challenge process for a mail-in/absentee ballot, it is
- 9 clear the Legislature removed that process, and the
- 10 Supreme Court recognized as much; the Pennsylvania
- 11 Supreme Court, that is, recognized as much.
- So for that reason, this appeal proceeds
- from a procedure before the County Board that does not
- 14 exist. And there is no process here to challenge these
- ballots or to appeal from the County Board's
- 16 determination. That's not to say that the petitioners
- 17 have no recourse. There are a number of recount
- 18 petitions that they can file. And if they believe that
- 19 there has been some fraudulent conduct, then they can
- 20 lay out their case and they can provide whatever
- 21 evidence that they have of that. And that's set forth
- 22 in 25 P.S. 3261, 3262, and 3263. And there are
- 23 procedures for the challenges that they seek to bring
- 24 now. There are procedures for the arguments they seek
- 25 to assert now. This is not one of them. This was

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 specifically contemplated and removed by the
- 3 Legislature.
- 4 THE COURT: Let me just stop you there
- 5 for a moment. Would you agree if an elector who --
- 6 first of all, when you use the expression "mail-in or
- 7 absentee, "why are you using that expression? Wouldn't
- 8 absentee votes be a subset of mail-in votes?
- 9 MR. NKWONTA: Not necessarily, based on
- 10 my understanding. And I am sure that there are others
- 11 who are more experienced that can jump in. My
- 12 understanding is there is a distinction between mail-in
- 13 and absentee ballots.
- 14 THE COURT: Would someone tell me what
- 15 it is? I don't quite get it.
- MR. NKWONTA: Absentee voting is
- 17 actually set forth in the Pennsylvania Constitution. I
- think there is a Constitutional provision that sets
- 19 forth requirements, broad requirements, for absentee --
- THE COURT: Yes, you have that clause:
- 21 you're disabled, out of the country, et cetera.
- But now that we have mail-in, why is
- there even a need for that category any longer?
- 24 Mr. McGarry, do you know the answer to that?
- 25 MR. McGARRY: Your Honor, in terms of

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 canvassing, they're treated the same.
- 3 THE COURT: They're treated the same.
- 4 And they should be treated the same in this case,
- 5 right?
- 6 MR. McGARRY: In terms of how they're
- 7 counted, yes. The process is different, Your Honor.
- 8 But in terms of how you count the ballots, the process
- 9 is the same.
- 10 THE COURT: Okay. I am sorry. Back to
- 11 you, Mr. Nkwonta.
- MR. NKWONTA: I would defer to both.
- THE COURT: Would you agree with me
- 14 then, if an elector failed to affix their signature to
- the mail-in ballot, that would be a fatal defect, and
- 16 that would invalidate that ballot?
- 17 MR. NKWONTA: I would agree with that,
- 18 Your Honor.
- 19 THE COURT: Okay. Let's assume the
- 20 County Board of Elections gets a mail-in ballot and the
- 21 outer envelope contains no signature but they count it.
- 22 Are you saying there is no standing or remedy available
- 23 to a political party to challenge what seems like a
- 24 clear error of law?
- MR. NKWONTA: No. What I am saying is

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 that that avenue is not through a challenge of the
- 3 canvassing board.
- THE COURT: What would they then do?
- 5 What is available to them for a remedy?
- MR. NKWONTA: Well, Your Honor, one of
- 7 the things they can do if they learn of an absentee or
- 8 mail-in ballot that was cast without a signature, they
- 9 may pursue relief through the recount procedures or
- 10 through an election contest.
- 11 THE COURT: A recount of the entire
- 12 county?
- MR. NKWONTA: A Petition for Recount,
- 14 where if they receive evidence -- or they may file an
- 15 election contest. I think that the key here is that
- when the Legislature eliminated the challenge process,
- 17 the Legislature was well aware that the County Boards
- 18 would be making these decisions. And the County Boards
- 19 have been expressly granted discretion to make these
- 20 decisions.
- So the fact they may make a mistake
- 22 every now and then is no reason to discard the
- 23 procedures that have been set forth by the State
- 24 Legislature.
- THE COURT: Okav.

TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 1 2 MR. NKWONTA: And in making this 3 argument, we're relying on the text and the language of the statute. And if the Court were to follow the text 4 5 and language of the statute, it is clear this challenge 6 or quasi challenge or whatever happened in the County 7 Board proceeding below was improper and the subsequent 8 appeal of that is not procedurally correct. 9 And I also would like to address the 10 discussion of the missing address and the address 11 requirement. And starting off from the premise that 12 the election code is to be liberally construed, which 13 means construed in a way not to disenfranchise voters, 14 I think it is notable that the provision the 15 Petitioners identified do not at any point make any 16 reference to a voter's requirement to include his or 17 her address on the declaration. There's no such 18 requirement. However, notably, in a companion 19 provision that allows third parties to assist voters or 20 allows third parties to sign declarations for voters, 21 that companion provision, 25 P.S. 3150.16(a)(1), that 22 companion provision expressly contemplates that the 23 third-party assistant must include his or her address. 24 THE COURT: It more than contemplates 25 it; it requires it.

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 MR. NKWONTA: It requires that the third
- 3 party include his or her address.
- Now, not only are we required to take
- 5 instruction from that expressed omission when it comes
- 6 to voters and expressed inclusion when it comes to
- 7 third-party assisters, it also makes good sense when
- 8 you think about the fact that when a voter receives an
- 9 absentee ballot -- I am sorry. When a voter receives a
- 10 mail ballot, that mail ballot is sent to the voter
- 11 based on information on that voter that the County
- 12 already has. And there's the bar code that Mr. McGarry
- 13 just discussed, the bar code that provides information,
- 14 including address information, for that voter.
- Montgomery County had already preprinted
- 16 addresses for the voter on some of these mail ballot
- 17 envelopes. The voter is a known entity, as is the
- 18 voter's address. But the third party, the third party
- in some instances and in many instances, is an unknown
- 20 entity.
- 21 So the statute clearly provides,
- 22 expressly provides, an address requirement for
- 23 third-party assisters whose information is not
- 24 reflected in the SURE system but does not do so for
- 25 voters. And there is a clear rationale for that that

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 follows the language of the statute; it also follows
- 3 common sense.
- 4 And then I also want to point out that
- 5 the Secretary's guidance takes on more significance
- 6 here than just a directive that one may ignore or
- 7 accept, because the Legislature has granted the
- 8 Secretary the authority to prescribe the form of the
- 9 declaration.
- 10 If the Secretary has authority to
- 11 provide a form of the declaration, that means the
- 12 Secretary similarly has the authority to alter the
- declaration and has the authority to clarify what the
- 14 terms on the declaration mean and what is required to
- 15 count a vote and what is required to nullify a vote and
- 16 what does not nullify a vote.
- 17 And the Secretary had made clear that an
- incorrect date, for instance, or a missing address is
- 19 not necessarily grounds to nullify a ballot.
- THE COURT: What is the basis for that
- 21 comment?
- MR. NKWONTA: And I was actually about
- 23 to get to that, to explain how to get there.
- The September 11th, 2020, guidelines
- 25 specifically set forth that the declaration can be

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 rejected if it is blank. And the Secretary then makes
- 3 clear that the County Board has the discretion as to
- 4 the sufficiency of the declaration. So if the
- 5 declaration is blank, then the declaration cannot be
- 6 accepted.
- 7 THE COURT: Let me stop you for a
- 8 moment, because I am looking at that September 11th
- 9 guideline by the Secretary.
- 10 And the sentence before the sentence
- 11 about there being a blank return, which would obviously
- 12 be disqualified, it says as follows: To promote
- consistency across the 67 counties, the County Boards
- 14 of Elections should follow the following steps when
- 15 processing returned absentee and mail-in ballots.
- 16 After setting aside ballots of electors who died prior
- 17 to the opening of polls, the County Board of Elections
- 18 shall examine the voter's declaration on the outer
- 19 envelope of each returned ballot and compare the
- information on the outer envelope, i.e., the voter's
- 21 name and address, with the information contained in the
- 22 registered absentee mail-in voter's file, the absentee
- voter's list and/or the military veterans, and
- 24 emergency civilian's absentee voters' file, end quote.
- 25 If the voter's declaration on the return envelope is

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 blank, that ballot return envelope must be set aside
- 3 and not counted.
- So we have if it is blank, obviously, it
- 5 shouldn't be counted. Because, to me, the biggest
- 6 issue is the signature -- the big issue before the
- 7 Court now is what is the significance of incomplete or
- 8 the absence of the address? So obviously if it is
- 9 blank, that's the easy one. But in the sentence that
- 10 precedes the one that you referenced, it does suggest
- 11 that the voter's name and address should be on the
- 12 outer envelope. So I am sure you noticed that. So
- what is the significance of that?
- 14 But then it goes on to say: If the
- voter's declaration on the returned envelope is signed
- and the County Board is satisfied that the declaration
- 17 is sufficient, the mail-in or absentee ballot should be
- 18 approved for canvassing unless challenged in accordance
- 19 with the Pennsylvania Election Code.
- So there, now, it seems to suggest that
- 21 really the signature is really the paramount sort of
- 22 matter to be affixed to the outer envelope by the
- 23 elector. So it is not exactly clear as to the
- 24 significance of the address to be included or not
- 25 included.

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- 2 MR. NKWONTA: Two responses to that,
- 3 Your Honor. First, I think the first paragraph you
- 4 read, the paragraph to follow should inform our
- 5 interpretation of that first paragraph. I am talking
- 6 specifically with reference to that sentence in which
- 7 the Secretary's guidance says the County Board shall
- 8 compare the information on the outer envelope; i.e.,
- 9 the voter's name and address.
- 10 So while the guidance does make
- 11 reference to the address, the sentences that follow
- 12 make clear that the Secretary, in his guidance, has
- 13 singled out blank declarations and potentially
- 14 declarations missing a signature but has not singled
- out declarations missing an address, which is, again,
- 16 consistent with the statute. Neither the Secretary's
- 17 guidance nor the statute anywhere singles out
- declarations with a missing address as a improper
- 19 declaration or one that is subject to rejection. And I
- 20 would also --
- THE COURT: Wait. Before you
- 22 continue -- I am sorry to interrupt you, but these
- thoughts come in my mind and out of my mind so quickly,
- I have to address them.
- 25 It talks about the County Board must be

- TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 1 2 satisfied the declaration is sufficient. Mr. McGarry 3 also commented on that. In that determination, that 4 the declaration is sufficient, is it only that this 5 person is still living? Is a registered voter? there any other qualification or condition that the 6 7 County Board is looking for to be satisfied that the 8 declaration is sufficient? That there is a signature 9 on the outer envelope? Is that the criteria, just 10 that? 11 MR. NKWONTA: I think the criteria is in 12 the part set forth in 25 P.S. 3146.8(g)(3). In that 13 section, it discusses that sometimes, in some 14 instances, proof of identification is required. 15 other instances, the County Board just needs to satisfy itself that the information contained in the registered 16 and absentee mail-in voter file entitled the individual 17 18 to vote and verify that individual's ability to vote. 19 So that is the standard. That is a 20 standard that has been set forth, you know, by the 21 Legislature, and that is the standard that the 22 Secretary has echoed. And County Board's discretion is 23 something that is contemplated as a part of this 24 electoral process.
- THE COURT: Why are we even looking at

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 the Secretary's quidance? Isn't it the statute that
- 3 governs here? In other words, even if the Secretary
- 4 says, If the voter's declaration on the return envelope
- 5 is signed, it's good -- suppose that is her
- 6 interpretation. Does that control my decision? Isn't
- 7 the interpretation of the code itself what is the most
- 8 important consideration?
- 9 MR. NKWONTA: The interpretation of the
- 10 code, indeed, is the most important consideration.
- 11 THE COURT: Okay.
- MR. NKWONTA: I think the Secretary's
- interpretation is helpful and instructive in some
- 14 instances because of the Secretary's role, because of
- 15 the Secretary's delegated role to prescribe the form of
- 16 this declaration. And if the Secretary has not taken
- 17 the position advanced here that a missing address
- 18 requires the invalidation of a declaration but has
- 19 identified other deficiencies that require the
- 20 invalidation of a declaration, I think that is also
- 21 instructive as well.
- THE COURT: Well, I think it is
- 23 instructive to your argument that instructions, whether
- 24 they come from the Secretary to the local county boards
- 25 or whatever the local county boards do on their own in

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- 2 terms of their interpretation of their obligations,
- 3 that those instructions, if incomplete or faulty,
- 4 should not disenfranchise a voter that relied upon
- 5 them. Is that ultimately your argument?
- MR. NKWONTA: Yes, Your Honor. We would
- 7 agree with that wholeheartedly.
- THE COURT: Go ahead.
- 9 MR. NKWONTA: And, lastly, I wanted to
- 10 highlight the statutory interpretation argument
- 11 advanced here. Not only is it inconsistent with the
- 12 text of the statute, but it is also inconsistent with
- 13 the way Pennsylvania Courts interpret and distinguish
- 14 between mandatory and directory [sic] provisions. Not
- 15 every requirement or every statement in the statute is
- 16 a mandatory requirement, and not every technicality or
- failure to follow every technicality shall result in
- 18 the rejection or invalidation of a ballot. And there
- 19 are ways to determine what the difference is and where
- 20 to draw that line between a provision that requires
- 21 outright invalidation and a provision -- whether the
- 22 failure to meet a certain provision is something that
- 23 the Board can take into its discretion.
- 24 And here, as the Pennsylvania Supreme
- 25 Court laid out in Pennsylvania Democratic Party v.

- TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 1 Boockvar, the Court should look to the specific 2 3 language and also the legislative intent. And the 4 specific language here does not foreclose counting 5 ballots with missing addresses. It doesn't foreclose counting ballots with any of the missing -- with any of 6 7 the information missing from 3150.16(a) or 3146.6(a). 8 But we have seen other instances and other statutes, 9 other provisions that expressly require the County 10 Board to reject mail ballots for certain omissions. 11 So, for instance, 25 P.S. 3146.8(g)(4) 12 states that it expressly invalidates ballots that 13 contain any text, mark, or symbol revealing the 14 elector's identity, political affiliation, or 15 candidate's preference. That is an expressed rejection in the statute of ballots that violate that provision. 16
- There is no analog in 3150.16. There is
 no analog in 3146.6. Those provisions then should be
 construed as directive, especially when considering the
 purpose of those provisions.
- If the purpose of the address on the
 declaration is to verify the elector's address, well,
 there are multiple ways of doing that. That has
 already been done, not only with the bar code that
 allows the County Board to look up the voter's

TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 1 2 information in the SURE system, but also of the fact 3 that many of these voters have actually entered their 4 address elsewhere on the outside of the envelope. And 5 some of those envelopes are preprinted. And even if we delve into the date, which is not before this Court or 6 7 properly before the Court -- but even if we delve into 8 issues with the date on these declarations, there is no 9 question these declarations and these ballots were 10 received timely, because they were pre canvassing. 11 pre canvassing occurs on Election Day. 12 So if these ballots were pre canvassed, 13 then there is no question these were timely received. 14 There can be no legitimate purpose or intent to 15 disenfranchise voters simply because they did not write 16 down the date where there is no question over the 17 timeliness of the receipt of these ballots. Because 18 these omissions or purported omissions are immaterial, 19 they are not mandatory under Pennsylvania law. And to 20 treat them as such would actually potentially implicate 21 violations of the Voting Rights Act and the Civil 22 Rights Act, which foreclose the denial of the right to 23 vote based on immaterial omissions. 24 That is not a claim necessarily before 25 this Court, but that should quide the Court's statutory

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 interpretation. Both state law and federal law
- 3 prohibit the denial of the right to vote based on
- 4 immaterial omissions that are not mandatory as set
- 5 forth in the statute.
- So for those reasons, Your Honor, we ask
- 7 the petition be denied.
- 8 THE COURT: Thank you.
- 9 Mr. Goldstein, there were two of them
- 10 and one of you. So I am going to give you one last
- 11 opportunity, if you would like, to rebut or reply to
- 12 any of the arguments made against you.
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: I understand. My screen
- 14 is filled with Democrats. I have a lot of Democratic
- 15 lawyers. I am grateful for the opportunity.
- 16 THE COURT: May I ask you a question
- 17 first, because I sense you have experience in election
- 18 law and in these matters. Is there a requirement for a
- 19 local County Board to do that which they did in this
- 20 case, as opposed to simply processing them, to actually
- 21 alert political parties that there is at least an
- 22 arguable claim as to the validity of these ballots?
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: There is not, Your
- 24 Honor, and not in a sort of formal way. That is part
- of why at the beginning of my comments I praised

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 Mr. Stein and Mr. McGarry. They have been
- 3 exceptionally equanimical in the way they have
- 4 approached this.
- 5 And spoiler alert, gentlemen: After the
- 6 election, I am going to call on you both to help me
- 7 propose statutory changes to eliminate a lot of what we
- 8 had to go through this time.
- 9 Your Honor is correct that I have some
- 10 experience with the election code. I have actually, in
- 11 the past, been involved in the writing and rewriting of
- 12 substantial portions of Pennsylvania's code.
- 13 THE COURT: So are you to blame if there
- is any ambiguity that I may find?
- 15 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Not in this section,
- 16 Your Honor. That wasn't my fault. I was involved in
- some of the writing of the statute to enable
- 18 provisional voting after HAVA was enacted, when I was a
- 19 brand new, baby lawyer.
- 20 THE COURT: In those circumstances where
- 21 other local county boards are not as gracious and fair
- in terms of how they treat the parties, what happens?
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: That's really one of the
- 24 big problems under our current election code.
- 25 Basically the boards are afforded a lot of discretion.

TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS 1 2 For example, if Mr. Stein had not been 3 equanimical, and just said, "You know, we're going to 4 count these," and they sliced them open, sliced open 5 the outer envelope and pulled out the secrecy envelope, now we have a problem. You can't unring that bell. 6 7 One of things we really have to do 8 statutorily in Pennsylvania is get to a place where we 9 can mount timely, narrow challenges, have those 10 envelopes set aside, not sliced opened discretionarily 11 and counted, and then do what Mr. Nkwonta proposes, 12 which is pick it up way, way, way, way, way on the back 13 end with recount petitions. That's not good for me in 14 blue counties; that's not good for them in red 15 counties. And it doesn't give the polity a sense that 16 the election was conducted in a fair and transparent 17 manner. So we have work to do on the legislative side. 18 If I may pivot to some of the 19 substantive arguments that were raised by my colleagues 20 or counterparts, the argument that we can't be here with this appeal fails. You know, if you look at 25 21 22 P.S. 3157, it is very broad. A, Section A, allows any 23 person aggrieved by any order or decision of any county 24 board regarding -- and it goes on in that manner -- may 25 appeal therefrom. Yes, mail-in ballots should be

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 accepted as cast, as Mr. Nkwonta indicated, subject to
- 3 the challenge provisions of 3157.
- 4 Challenges like the one we lodged are
- 5 entirely consistent with the changes the General
- 6 Assembly made when it enabled mail-in balloting earlier
- 7 this year; otherwise, we would have absurd results. We
- 8 couldn't challenge ballots cast by known, dead felons
- 9 until way down the road. That's not what they
- 10 intended. Also, the Secretary, on the guidance sheet
- 11 provided that you read out loud, contemplates
- 12 challenges to mail-in ballots. So we can be here.
- The second point, there has been much
- 14 said how "fill out" doesn't mean the address. No one
- 15 has said -- other than me has said what is self
- 16 evident: "Fill out" means fill out. What are you
- filling out if you don't fill out the blanks placed on
- 18 the form by the Commonwealth?
- The Board-printed address on the ballot
- doesn't really matter for purposes of the declaration.
- 21 It is there for the Board's purpose. Mr. McGarry talks
- 22 about what it does. It is there to help them do their
- work. The General Assembly wanted the elector to write
- 24 it, and it is not a minor requirement. They wanted the
- 25 elector to write it as a part of the elector's swearing

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 that the address where the voter resides is the address
- 3 from which he is entitled to vote, and he is
- 4 reconfirming it.
- 5 Adopting and expanding the Court's anti-
- 6 fraud argument, attributed as my best argument, the
- 7 fact a voter has to write the address he is using to
- 8 vote has an anti-fraud purpose. A voter has to write
- 9 his own address in his hand. And it helps the Board
- 10 and the Postal Service and everyone else, as we heard,
- 11 resolve where the voter lives.
- I mean, the fact that we print it on the
- 13 ballot and they have to black it out because it was
- 14 messing up the Postal Service is immaterial for our
- 15 purpose, right?
- 16 THE COURT: But I asked Mr. McGarry, and
- 17 I'll ask you the same question: Do you agree when an
- 18 elector goes and votes in person, the election code
- does not require that person to provide some sort of
- 20 affirmation they still reside at the address that is
- 21 registered with the election officials with the County?
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: So they do when they
- 23 sign the voter book, right? You come into the polling
- 24 place and you sign that book. What you're signing is,
- 25 I still live here and I can vote here and I'm me; those

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 are the functions that take place when you sign that
- 3 voter book.
- 4 THE COURT: Actually, does it say that?
- 5 That's my question. When you are signing your name,
- 6 are you also affirming substantive content? I am not
- 7 sure. I am using me own past experience. I am not
- 8 looking at the code. Is that true?
- 9 Let me try to establish if that is a
- 10 true fact, because that makes a difference to me.
- 11 Because I've written notes to myself throughout these
- 12 arguments. One is: What is the purpose of the address
- on the outer envelope? Does it serve any legitimate
- 14 purpose? Is it material or immaterial? Is it a
- 15 technical defect, et cetera.
- So do you have an answer to that,
- 17 Mr. McGarry, or anyone from the County? When an
- 18 elector goes and votes in person, are they required by
- 19 law -- they are required by law to sign their name.
- 20 But are they actually making an affirmation as to a
- 21 sentence or two that is factually correct underneath or
- 22 above or below their signature?
- MR. McGARRY: Your Honor, there is no
- 24 such declaration on the poll books. You are simply
- 25 signing in that you voted.

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- THE COURT: No, no, no. You haven't
- 3 voted yet. You have to sign in you're allowed to vote.
- 4 MR. McGARRY: Right. You're signing to
- 5 show as evidence that you're there, now voting, and
- 6 that you are who you say you are. But there is no
- 7 affirmation. There is no declaration on those poll
- 8 books whatsoever.
- 9 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Voting from a location
- 10 where you're not entitled to vote is not permitted.
- 11 THE COURT: Both statements can be true
- 12 at the same time. The statement you said just can be
- 13 true as a statement. But is the statement Mr. McGarry
- 14 just stated, is that true?
- 15 MR. GOLDSTEIN: I don't have a poll
- 16 book, a sample poll book in front of me. I am going,
- 17 like the Court is, off my recollection. I would
- 18 certainly say affixing your signature in a register is
- 19 an unsworn falsification if you're not entitled to vote
- 20 at that location.
- 21 THE COURT: This is actually an
- 22 important point to me. I am wondering if in the next
- 23 hour or two someone can provide me with that
- 24 information.
- 25 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Perhaps someone from

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 County Board can provide us with a copy of a page from
- 3 a book?
- 4 THE COURT: And the reason it is,
- 5 because it answers my question that ultimately you all
- 6 are presenting different perspectives on the same
- 7 issue. How important really is it that the person
- 8 write their address, the elector, on the outer
- 9 envelope? Does it have to be in a specific place? Is
- 10 it of any significance that it is preprinted in a
- 11 different place?
- So the purpose of it is important to me.
- 13 And I will be quite frank with you in my thinking. It
- 14 seems to have some significance if it is a declaration
- by an elector that they still live in that residence
- and it is proper and legal for them to vote in that
- 17 voting district or county. But if there is no such
- 18 requirement for an in-person voter, then it seems much
- 19 less material.
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: So, Your Honor, there
- 21 actually is more material in the mail-in context, and
- 22 here is why: The mail and absentee context have much
- 23 heightened what I will say -- "suspicion" is the wrong
- 24 word, right? Meaning, when we have an opportunity to
- 25 confront a voter in a polling place, there are locally

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 elected polling officials who presumably know their
- 3 neighbors. Somebody walks in --
- 4 THE COURT: I don't -- yes and no. Yes
- 5 and no. Yes, they certainly will know some of their
- 6 neighbors, but there will be a great swath of people
- 7 whom they don't know. And these people working the
- 8 polling stations, they could be new, so they may not
- 9 know many people.
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: True. But what we do
- 11 know, the corollary of the topic we just discussed
- 12 briefly there, is that in a mail-in context, there is
- 13 no scrutiny. No one is going to see that person. The
- 14 only thing we're going to have is the writing they
- submit, which is why it is much more important in that
- 16 context that that declaration be completely filled out;
- 17 that the elector in his own hand attest to the fact
- 18 that he lives at the address from which he is voting;
- 19 That's why that "fill out" phrase is in there, in that
- 20 statute.
- 21 THE COURT: But if it is not required
- for in person, then why should it be required for the
- 23 mail-in?
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: Because the scrutiny is
- 25 heightened for mail-in because that declaration is the

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 only thing we've got to know whether that elector is
- 3 who he says he is.
- 4 THE COURT: It's the same thing with
- 5 mail-in -- it's the same thing with in-person; it's the
- 6 only thing you have to work with.
- 7 MR. WILLIAMS: Your Honor, if I may? I
- 8 know I didn't present argument, but --
- 9 THE COURT: For the record, would you
- 10 identify yourself for the court reporter.
- 11 MR. WILLIAMS: Oh, I'm sorry. I am
- 12 Kahlil Williams. I am also representing the DNC,
- 13 Interveners. And I just make the simple point that for
- 14 the purposes -- there is a prospect, to which
- 15 Mr. Nkwonta mentioned, which you can challenge an
- 16 application of a mail-in, of a mail-in voter. And,
- 17 certainly, if you had some suspicion that a person did
- 18 not live where they say they live, you can challenge
- 19 the application at the point we all described.
- So the idea that the only way you can
- 21 determine whether or not someone lives where they say
- 22 they live is at the time a ballot is canvassed and
- about to be counted is just not true. You can
- 24 certainly get people at the application process, people
- 25 that you think are not voting where their address said

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 they should.
- 3 THE COURT: Well, I do appreciate that.
- 4 I think it is only fair to Mr. Goldstein to only fend
- 5 off one person per party. But thank you for that.
- But that raises a different issue: In
- 7 some jurisdictions around the country, every single
- 8 elector is mailed a mail-in ballot. Am I correct that
- 9 in Pennsylvania, if one applied in the primary, it got
- 10 automatically mailed to that elector if they applied
- 11 for the primary; that's correct? Or they applied for
- 12 the general election? But they had to apply, as
- opposed to it being automatically sent to them?
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: One must apply for a
- 15 mail-in ballot in Pennsylvania.
- THE COURT: In Pennsylvania, okay.
- 17 MR. NKWONTA: Your Honor, may I offer an
- 18 example, an analogy here, to demonstrate the lack of
- 19 relevance of an address requirement.
- The address that is listed here, we're
- 21 assuming that every absentee voter or mail-in voter
- 22 lives in Pennsylvania. Now, there are voters who live
- overseas; there are voters who live in other states.
- 24 What would their declaration or their current address
- 25 reveal about their eligibility to vote in any

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 particular location?
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: So I can answer that,
- 4 which is that they have to put the address from which
- 5 they are voting, right? If they live overseas -- maybe
- 6 even Mr. McGarry or Mr. Stein can shed some light --
- 7 you have to put the Pennsylvania address at which you
- 8 last resided and from which you vote. In fact, in that
- 9 case, it becomes quite important to know what entitled
- 10 that overseas voter to vote from that location.
- 11 So the address, again, as Mr. Nkwonta
- 12 points out, is vital for ascertaining who that voter is
- and why they vote from that place.
- 14 MR. McGARRY: Your Honor, if I may, I
- 15 know that Mr. Goldstein has a lot of passion for
- 16 wanting to rewrite the election code, as he has already
- 17 said. And he is trying to do that today, actually, by
- importing into the election code this requirement that
- 19 the address be filled out. He said that "fill out"
- 20 means fill out the full address. Well, it doesn't say
- 21 that. He may want it to say that, he may be pleading
- for it to say that, he may want to change the law to
- 23 say that, but it doesn't say that.
- And as Mr. Williams pointed out, there
- is an application process. And when you fill out your

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 application for a ballot, you do need to fill out your
- 3 name, your address. And you need to sign the
- 4 application.
- 5 And so there is a process in place
- 6 whereby if somebody believed that somebody was not a
- 7 valid elector because they moved, because they died,
- 8 what have you, there is a process by which by the
- 9 Friday before the election an objection could be raised
- 10 by the parties, by the candidate, whatever. It could
- 11 have been raised.
- 12 There was no objections to any of these
- 13 ballots on that basis.
- 14 THE COURT: Let me just stop you for a
- 15 second though. I mean, that's very important, what you
- 16 just said.
- 17 If someone applies in the primary, in
- 18 May, for an a mail-in ballot, they get it, they vote.
- 19 Now let's turn our attention to the November election.
- 20 Automatically they would be mailed --
- MR. WILLIAMS: No.
- THE COURT: They don't have to reply, or
- 23 do they have to reply?
- MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, Your Honor. So if I
- 25 may, the way it works is: A person can choose one of

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 two options. They can choose to vote -- they can
- 3 choose to just get a ballot for the primary, or they
- 4 can choose to get ballots for the entire year, right?
- 5 So in February you can fill something out that says, "I
- 6 want all of my ballots mailed for all of 2020." You
- 7 can also say, "I want a primary ballot, but I want to
- 8 vote in person for the general," or "I want to reserve
- 9 my rights."
- 10 THE COURT: So back to my
- 11 hypothetical -- which I am sure is not so hypothetical.
- 12 I am sure it happened to maybe thousands of people.
- 13 They apply for all of 2020, they attest to what their
- 14 address is at that moment, they make their application
- in February-ish, March. So the general election ballot
- is mailed to them in, you know, probably October. And
- I guess, they don't have to re-attest where they live
- in that intervening, you know, five months or so. So
- 19 that's the potential. Okay.
- 20 All right. So I got it. It is very
- 21 interesting.
- 22 All right. Mr. Goldstein, you're going
- 23 to get the last word. But I still would be interested
- 24 for counsel -- I am interested in what type of
- 25 attestation does an in-person voter have to make when

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 they sign the roll book.
- MR. GOLDSTEIN: I will find that for you
- 4 in conjunction with Mr. McGarry after the call. We
- 5 will maybe get you a page out of the book.
- 6 THE COURT: Okay. Fine. Anyway, you
- 7 have the last word here.
- 8 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Just a handful of points
- 9 so I don't overstay my welcome.
- 10 So we talked about the anti-fraud stuff.
- I am not going to beat that horse anymore.
- 12 Let me move to the instructions on the
- 13 form governing, right. If the Board issued an
- 14 instruction saying, "Don't sign the ballot. Just send
- it back," the instructions can't override the statute,
- 16 right?
- So, you know, the instructions are
- interesting, but they can't override a statute. No one
- 19 has yet said, with all the talking we've done,
- 20 what "fill out" means. They said it certainly doesn't
- 21 mean fill out the address; that much is clear. But no
- 22 one has said what it means.
- It is in the statute. It is an
- 24 independent clause in the statute: Shall fill out,
- 25 date, and sign. So I think I am the only one that has

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 come up with something plausible for "fill out," which
- 3 means completely fill out all the information the
- 4 General Assembly says is vital to ascertain whether
- 5 that ballot was validly cast.
- 6 THE COURT: Well, let's stay with that
- 7 for one moment. We know it was not dated or signed,
- 8 because it is separate. So what's left?
- 9 MR. GOLDSTEIN: The address; that's it.
- 10 THE COURT: And they didn't do it. So
- 11 the question is: How significant of an omission is
- 12 that? Is that going to be fatal or not, is that going
- 13 to invalidate a ballot or not? Your analogy earlier in
- 14 your argument about a doctor's office when filling in
- is not going to -- I don't think that is going to be
- 16 helpful for you if you're arguing other cases, because,
- 17 A, we all know that the nurse will help the person who
- is in medical need, and that's appropriate. I think
- 19 you have to be careful with that analogy.
- 20 And, secondly, would it invalidate the
- 21 person's right to see the doctor and get medical care
- 22 because there is an omission in the form they're
- 23 filling out in the waiting room, and we all know the
- 24 answer is no.
- 25 MR. GOLDSTEIN: Now we're on the thin

- 1 TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
- 2 branches of my terrible analogy. But in this context,
- 3 if I may have my analogy forgotten for present
- 4 purposes, the statute provides for three things: fill
- 5 out, date, and sign.
- If you date it and sign it, the only
- 7 thing left to fill out is the address. The General
- 8 Assembly has said it is vital. It is an error of law
- 9 for the Board to say that a declaration is sufficient
- in violation of the statute. To use the Court's
- 11 example, if the Board had reviewed and accepted a
- 12 ballot where no signature was, quote, sufficient, this
- 13 Court could correct that error of law. The Court can
- do the same here.
- The Board committed an error of law by
- 16 accepting ballots where the voter did not, quote, fill
- out, date, and sign the declaration and violation at 25
- 18 P.S. 3150.16(a). And this Court should overturn the
- 19 Board's decision and order those ballots not counted
- 20 for failure to fill out the declaration.
- 21 Thank you, Your Honor.
- THE COURT: Okay. Thank you, all. It
- 23 is very interesting. I will have a decision to you --
- 24 today is Tuesday. Certainly this week and probably
- 25 Thursday, because I think timing is very, very

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TRUMP v. MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
1
2
     important. I would be grateful if you would send me
3
     what we talked about earlier, when an in-person voter
     signs, what is it precisely they're signing, and are
4
5
     they attesting to any substantive content?
6
                    Thank you, all. It was a very wonderful
7
     argument. And I will have an order out to you shortly
8
     then. Thank you all.
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                    (At 10:22 a.m., the proceedings were
10
                    concluded.)
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4	I HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings and
5	evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes
6	taken by me in the above cause and that this copy is a
7	correct transcript of the same.
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12	BERNADETTE BLACK BERARDINELLI,
13	RDR, CRR, CRC Official Court Reporter
14	November 10, 2020, 6:15 p.m.
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zoom [1] - 15:2